

a sex symbol. On *Chris I* was a mother. Two amazing roles with completely different types of humor.

Why did *Everybody Hates Chris* last only four seasons?

Because they're idiots! (Laughs.) I saw the signs. When the network went from UPN to CW, I thought, *We might not make it to the fifth season.* We had a name for UPN: the UnderPaid Negro network. I also said, "As soon as the show is canceled and is syndicated, people are going to want it back, and it's gonna be gone." Networks don't like to admit mistakes. That's why they don't bring shows back. It's a power thing. You get new executives and new CEOs, and instead of doing what makes sense, everybody wants to start their own new thing. Who cares what the viewers want?

What was the best part of working on *Everybody Hates Chris*?

Working with such a great cast. I loved them. Chris Rock was not one of those celebrities that has a show and doesn't care. He was involved from when I went in for the audition to the actual filming of shows. I would be onstage doing a scene, and I'd hear [in a Chris Rock voice] "Okay, Tichina, try it this way!" He was always there.

In real life are you as strict as your character Rochelle, the mom on *Everybody Hates Chris*?

That character is my mom, my aunt and my grandmother—the three matriarchs of my family who raised me. To this day I find myself saying stuff to my six-year-old daughter like, "Girl, I'll slap you into next week!" You always find yourself using those idle threats. My mom used to say, "Girl, I'm gonna slap the stew out of you!" What the hell is stew?

What's next?

I'm in development with a show right now. I just got an amazing script that was written for me for a sitcom, so I'm hoping that works out. Plus I started a band called KNOW Pressure. It's a baby work in progress. If I had a dollar for everybody that asked me to make an album, I'd be rich! I got a chick drummer. Music allows me to get a lot of shit off my chest. Music makes me feel better and has always been in my spirit, so it's a way for me to have another outlet.

Would you trade your success as an actress for a musical career?

Singing has always been my first love. I can't say I would give up one for the other. The way I live my life and the way I've done my career is I go with the flow. I go with what's going. If I had to go back onstage, I would. If it calls for me to do another TV show, I'll do another. Film is something I keep tapping into but haven't fully cracked yet. TV is more powerful now. It used to be looked down on. I kept telling people TV is where it's at. It's nice and steady once you're in it. You have a lot of big film people that are coming to TV now. So, ha! Kiss my ass! (Laughs.) 🍌